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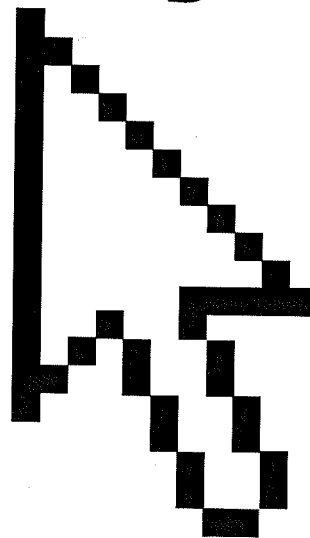- *Definitive coverage of hardware, software, the Internet, and more!*

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start/stop transmission *n. See* asynchronous transmission.

startup *n. See* boot[1].

startup application *n.* On the Macintosh, the application that takes control of the system when the computer is turned on.

STARTUP.CMD *n.* A special-purpose batch file stored in the root directory of the startup disk in OS/2—the OS/2 equivalent of an MS-DOS AUTOEXEC.BAT file.

startup disk *n. See* system disk.

startup ROM *n.* The bootstrap instructions coded into a computer's ROM (read-only memory) and executed at startup. The startup ROM routines enable a computer to check itself and its devices (such as the keyboard and disk drives), prepare itself for operation, and run a short program to load an operating-system loader program. *See also* boot[1], power-on self test.

startup screen *n.* A text or graphics display that appears on the screen when a program is started (run). Startup screens usually contain information about the software's version and often contain a product or corporate logo.

star-wired ring *n.* A network topology in which hubs and nodes connect to a central hub in typical star fashion, but the connections within the central hub form a ring. Star-wired ring is a combination of star and ring topologies.

state *n. See* status.

stateful *adj.* Of or pertaining to a system or process that monitors all details of the state of an activity in which it participates. For example, stateful handling of messages takes account of their content. *Compare* stateless.

stateless *adj.* Of or pertaining to a system or process that participates in an activity without monitoring all details of its state. For example, stateless handling of messages might take account of only their sources and destinations but not their content. *Compare* stateful.

statement *n.* The smallest executable entity within a programming language.

state-of-the-art *adj.* Up to date; at the forefront of current hardware or software technology.

static[1] *adj.* In information processing, fixed or predetermined. For example, a static memory buffer remains invariant in size throughout program execution. The opposite condition is *dynamic*, or ever-changing.

static[2] *n.* In communications, a crackling noise caused by electrical interference with a transmitted signal. *See also* noise (definition 2).

static allocation *n.* Apportionment of memory that occurs once, usually when the program starts. The memory remains allocated during the program's execution and is not deallocated until the program is finished. *See also* allocate, deallocate. *Compare* dynamic allocation.

static binding *n.* Binding (converting symbolic addresses in the program to storage-related addresses) that occurs during program compilation or linkage. *Also called:* early binding. *Compare* dynamic binding.

static buffer *n.* A secondary sound buffer that contains an entire sound; these buffers are convenient because the entire sound can be written once to the buffer. *See also* streaming buffer.

static electricity *n.* An electrical charge accumulated in an object. Although generally harmless to humans, the discharge of static electricity through an electronic circuit can cause severe damage to the circuit.

static RAM *n.* A form of semiconductor memory (RAM) based on the logic circuit known as a flip-flop, which retains information as long as there is enough power to run the device. Static RAMs are usually reserved for use in caches. *Acronym:* SRAM. *See also* cache, RAM, synchronous burst static RAM. *Compare* dynamic RAM.

static routing *n.* Routing based on a fixed forwarding path. Unlike dynamic routing, static routing does not adjust to changing network conditions. *Compare* dynamic routing.

static Web page *n.* Web page that displays the same content to all viewers. Usually written in hypertext markup language (HTML), a static Web page displays content that changes only if the HTML code is altered. *See also* dynamic Web page.

station *n.* **1.** In the IEEE 802.11 wireless LAN specification, a single, often mobile, node. **2.** *See* workstation.

stationery[1] *adj.* Describing a type of document that, when opened by the user, is duplicated by the system; the copy is opened for the user's modification while the original document remains intact. Stationery documents can be used as document templates or boilerplates. *See also* boilerplate, template (definition 5).

stationery[2] *n.* A stationery document. *See also* stationery[1].

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statistical multiplexer *n.* A multiplexing device that adds intelligence to time-division multiplexing by using buffering (temporary storage) and a microprocessor to combine transmission streams into a single signal and to allocate available bandwidth dynamically. *Also called:* stat mux. *See also* dynamic allocation, multiplexing, time-division multiplexing.

statistics *n.* The branch of mathematics that deals with the relationships among groups of measurements and with the relevance of similarities and differences in those relationships. *See also* binomial distribution, Monte Carlo method, probability, regression analysis, standard deviation, stochastic.

stat mux *n. See* statistical multiplexer.

status *n.* The condition at a particular time of any of numerous elements of computing—a device, a communications channel, a network station, a program, a bit, or other element—used to report on or to control computer operations.

status bar *n.* In Windows 9x and Windows NT 4 and later, a space at the bottom of many program windows that contains a short text message about the current condition of the program. Some programs also display an explanation of the currently selected menu command in the status bar. See the illustration.

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Status bar.

status codes *n.* Strings of digits or other characters that indicate the success or failure of some attempted action. Status codes were commonly used to report the results of early computer programs, but most software today uses words or graphics. Internet users, especially those with UNIX shell accounts, are likely to encounter status codes while using the Web or FTP. *See also* HTTP status codes.

steganography *n.* A "hide-in-plain-sight" technique for concealing information by embedding a message within an innocuous cover message. In steganography, bits of unnecessary data within an image, sound, text, or even a blank file are replaced with bits of invisible information. The term steganography comes from the Greek for "covered writing" and has traditionally included any method of secret communication that conceals the existence of the message. Because steganography cannot be detected by decryption software, it is often used to replace or supplement encryption.

step-frame *n.* The process of capturing video images one frame at a time. This process is used by computers that are too slow to capture analog video images in real time.

stepper motor *n.* A mechanical device that rotates only a fixed distance each time it receives an electrical pulse. A stepper motor is part of a disk drive.

step-rate time *n.* The time required to move a disk actuator arm from one track to the next. *See also* actuator, stepper motor.

stereogram *n. See* autostereogram.

sticky *adj.* In reference to a Web site, properties such as targeted content or services that increase the amount of time users choose to spend at the site and increase user's desire to return to the site repeatedly.

StickyKeys *n.* An accessibility feature built into Macintosh and Windows computers that causes modifier keys such as Shift, Control, or Alt to "stay on" after they are pressed, eliminating the need to press multiple keys simultaneously. This feature facilitates the use of modifier keys by users who are unable to hold down one key while pressing another.

stochastic *adj.* Based on random occurrences. For example, a stochastic model describes a system by taking into account chance events as well as planned events.

stop bit *n.* In asynchronous transmission, a bit that signals the end of a character. In early electromechanical teleprinters, the stop bit provided time for the receiving mechanism to coast back to the idle position and, depending on the mechanism, had a duration of 1, 1.5, or 2 data bits. *See also* asynchronous transmission. *Compare* parity bit, start bit.

Stop error *n.* A serious error that affects the operating system and that could place data at risk. The operating system generates an obvious message, a screen with the Stop error, rather than continuing on and possibly corrupting data. *Also called:* blue screen error, fatal system error. *See also* Blue Screen of Death.

storage *n.* In computing, any device in or on which information can be kept. Microcomputers have two main types of storage: random access memory (RAM) and disk drives and other external storage media. Other types of storage include read-only memory (ROM) and buffers.

storage area network *n.* A high-speed network that provides a direct connection between servers and storage, including shared storage, clusters, and disaster-recovery